

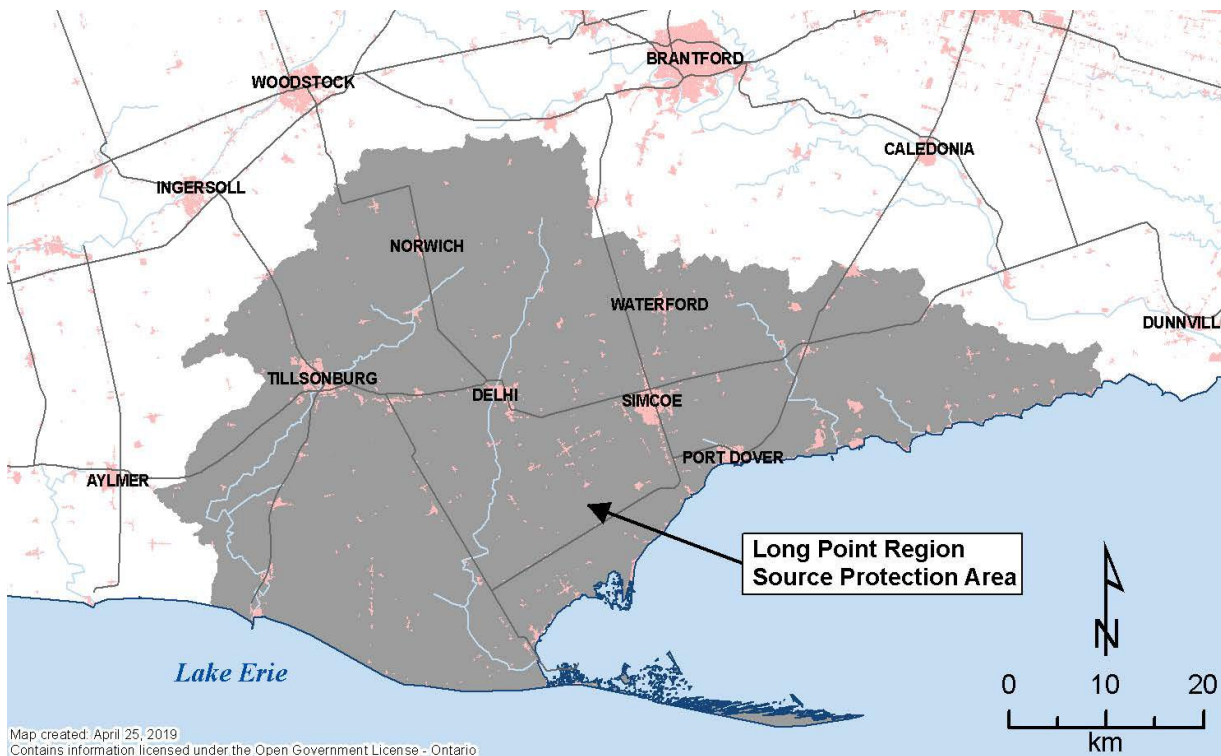
Long Point Region Source Protection Annual Progress Report 2023

I. Introduction

This annual progress report outlines the progress made in implementing our Source Protection Plan for the Long Point Region Source Protection Area, as required by the *Clean Water Act, 2006* and its regulations.

The Source Protection Plan is the culmination of extensive science-based assessment, research, consultation, and collaboration with local stakeholders and the provincial government. When policies in the plan are implemented it ensures that activities carried out near municipal wells and surface water intakes will not pose significant risk to the sources of our drinking water.

We acknowledge and recognize the efforts made by our local municipalities, stakeholders, and Source Protection Committee in the development and implementation of the Source Protection Plan.



II. A message from your local Source Protection Committee

P: Progressing Well/On Target – The majority of the Source Protection Plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing.

Of legally-binding plan policies that address significant drinking water threats, 100% are implemented or in progress.

A total of 715 potential existing significant drinking water threats have been identified in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area as of December 31, 2023. Of these, 144 threats have been determined through field verification to no longer exist and 319 threats have been reported as managed and no longer pose a significant risk to municipal drinking water sources. All municipalities in our Source Protection Area have processes in place to ensure planning decisions conform to our Source Protection Plan and are managing or prohibiting new threats as appropriate.

III. Our Watershed

The Long Point Region Source Protection Area (watershed) is drained by more than 30 creeks and tributaries. These creeks drain an area of 2,782 square kilometres in portions of Brant, Elgin, Haldimand, Norfolk, and Oxford counties.

The watershed has ten municipal drinking water systems. Three systems are located in Oxford County in the communities of Dereham Centre, Oxford South (communities of Norwich, Otterville and Springford), and the Town of Tillsonburg, all of which are groundwater systems. Norfolk County has groundwater sourced municipal drinking water systems in the communities of Delhi, Simcoe and Waterford and surface water sourced municipal drinking water systems (Lake Erie intakes) in the communities of Port Dover and Port Rowan. Haldimand County and Elgin County each have one municipal-residential drinking water system within the watershed, the former of which is a surface water system (Lake Erie Intake) and the latter of which is a groundwater system. There are also two other municipal drinking water systems serving Long Point Region residents that are sourced outside of the watershed: Mount Elgin and the Bayham Distribution System.

IV. At a Glance: Progress on Source Protection Plan Implementation

1. Source Protection Plan Policies and Addressing Significant Risks

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Of legally-binding plan policies that address significant drinking water threats, 100% are implemented, in progress, or implemented because policy outcome(s) have been evaluated and it is determined that no further action(s) is required.

2. Municipal Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Within the Long Point Region Source Protection Area, eight municipalities have vulnerable areas where significant drinking water threat policies apply. Planning departments and building officials are screening applications for locations within vulnerable areas where threats to drinking water sources are possible and source protection plan policies may apply.

Municipalities within our Source Protection Area are also required to review and update their Official Plan to ensure it conforms with the Source Protection Plan the next time they undertake an Official Plan review under the Planning Act. As of December 31, 2023, the Municipality of Bayham, Norfolk County, Oxford County, and Haldimand County have completed or are in the final stages of completing their Official Plan amendments. Updates on the Township of Malahide Official Plan is currently in progress.

3. Septic Inspections

P: Progressing Well/On Target

In the Long Point Region Source Protection Area there are 101 on-site sewage systems that require inspections every five years in accordance with the Ontario Building Code. None of the systems were due to be inspected in 2023.

4. Risk Management Plans

PS: Progressing Well/Short of Target

The Long Point Region Source Protection Plan contains policies that require the development of Risk Management Plans to manage some drinking water threats. Screening processes are in place at municipalities to ensure applications for future development are reviewed for potential threat activities and applicability of source protection policies.

As of December 31, 2023, a total of 18 Risk Management Plans are in place in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area. Currently, there are 57 properties with existing significant drinking water threat activities that are subject to section 58 policy but are not yet managed with an established or agreed to risk management plan.

In 2023, eight Risk Management Plans were agreed to, managing 14 significant drinking water threat activities Oxford County, including: application, storage and handling of commercial fertilizer; application of agricultural source material; and application of pesticides. Risk Management Officials in the Municipality of Bayham, Oxford County and Norfolk County have reported an additional seven Risk Management Plans currently in progress.

In 2023, 54 inspections were carried out across our Source Protection Area for activities requiring a Risk Management Plan under section 58, four of which found activities taking place without a Risk Management Plan as required by the Source Protection Plan. An additional 25 inspections were carried out in the Municipality of Bayham and County of Oxford for activities prohibited under section 57 of the Clean Water Act.

5. Provincial Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Ontario Provincial ministries including Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) implement source protection policies that use prescribed instruments to manage significant threat activities.

Ontario ministries review applications for new or amended provincial approvals (i.e. prescribed instruments, such as Environmental Compliance Approvals issued under the Environmental Protection Act) where they have been identified as a tool in the Long Point Region Source Protection Plan to address activities that pose a significant risk to source water. The Province has established Standard Operating Policies to ensure that approvals take into account the science generated through the Drinking Water Source Protection Program and policies in the Source Protection Plan. Provincial approvals are issued, denied, amended, or revoked to conform to plan policies. Where necessary, conditions are added to approvals to ensure that the activity does not pose a significant threat to sources of drinking water.

The Ministries have reported 100% completion of previously issued provincial approvals in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area.

6. Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

To raise awareness about the protection of local drinking water sources, municipalities across the Long Point Region Source Protection Area have installed a total of 12 drinking water protection signs on municipal roads and trails surrounding vulnerable areas. In addition, five signs have been installed on Provincial highways since the Source Protection Plan came into effect in 2016.

Municipalities in our Source Protection Area have reported a change in the behaviour of community residents since the source protection plan first came into effect in 2016, noting that landowners have become more open to participating in the source protection program.

7. Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

All policies in the Long Point Region Source Protection Plan have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

8. Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

Drinking water quality Issues have been identified for nitrate at the Richmond Community Water System, Simcoe Well Supply, Oxford South Water System, and Tillsonburg Well Supply. In 2023, most of these systems have reported either an increasing concentration/trend or no change. Issue Contributing Areas (WHPA-ICAs) have been delineated for all nitrate Issues in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area.

Municipalities continue to implement risk management strategies to address threat activities associated with an Issue/WHPA-ICA. All municipalities have monitoring and treatments systems in place to ensure that municipal drinking water meets the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. Municipalities have used the results of ongoing monitoring to determine where further investigation is needed and to conduct assessments to identify sources and/or explain concentration variability. Over time, appropriate monitoring will help determine if implementation of plan policies and other actions are improving raw water quality for these systems.

9. Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

An order was received from the Ministry in June 2020 providing for a comprehensive review and update to the Long Point Region Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan (Plan) under Section 36 of the Clean Water Act.

Examples of tasks in the workplan include incorporation of:

- Growth and infrastructure changes (e.g. new drinking water supply wells)
- Technical Rule changes
- Transport pathway updates
- Results of environmental monitoring programs (e.g. review of monitoring data to evaluate existing or the potential for Issues identified at municipal drinking water wells)

The Plan update is currently underway and is expected to be submitted to the Ministry for approval in 2024.

10. More from the Watershed

To learn more about the Long Point Source Protection Area, visit the [Lake Erie Source Protection website](#).